

## **Staying Safe on Rainy Roads**

Recent heavy rains are a timely reminder that snow and ice are not the only weather that can get us into trouble on the road. Wind and water can be every bit as dangerous. Stay safer on wet roads and in stormy weather with these tips:

- Check for Weather Service warnings and stay inside if you can.
- Slow down, and increase your following distance to 5 or more seconds.
- Don't use cruise control.
- Make sure wiper blades are in good condition, and use low-beam headlights for visibility. Stay away from larger vehicles to avoid blinding spray.
- Be extra alert, and scan for trouble ahead. Remember that bridges, culverts and roadbeds may be washed away or undermined. Obey all road closure signs and barricades.
- Don't drive over water-covered roads. It may be deeper than it looks and hide dangerous conditions. You can lose control of your vehicle in as little as 6 inches of water, and become stranded or trapped with a stalled motor.
- Abandon your stalled vehicle if you can escape safely, and seek higher ground to avoid being swept away by flood waters. Watch for hazards if walking through water, which can obstruct your view.
- Test brakes after driving through any water, and dry them by braking lightly at low speeds if needed.
- Wind can be hazardous, especially for large vehicles; reduce your speed.
- Never get near or cross any downed wires.
- Avoid hydroplaning (skidding on a wet surface when water separates tires from the road) by:
  - Being extra cautious during the first 10 minutes of rain, when the oily road surface makes it more likely to happen, especially at higher speeds.
  - Keeping tires properly inflated at all times, plus rotated and replaced as needed.
  - Reducing speed on wet roads, and turning off cruise control.
  - Avoiding pooled water and outer lanes where it tends to accumulate.
  - Driving in the tire tracks left by other cars.
  - Avoiding hard braking and quick turns.
  - Driving in a lower gear, and turning on 4WD if you have it.